

PATENT APPLICATION

DYNAMIC PAGE GENERATOR

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Entity: Small

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San Francisco, California 94111
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quote server to obtain the quotes of interest, poll a sports score server to obtain the scores of interest and poll a weather server to obtain the weather. With this information, the server generates the custom page and returns it to the user. This approach is useful where there are not many requestors and where the attendant delay is acceptable to users. While it may be the case that current users are willing to wait while pages load in their browsers, growing impatience with waiting will turn users away from such servers, especially as use increases.

One approach to avoiding long waits is to transfer the custom information in non-real-time, so that the information is stored local to the user as it arrives and is presented to the user on request. A disadvantage of such a system is that the networks used by the user become clogged with data continually streaming to the user and require large amounts of local storage. Another disadvantage is that the locally stored information will become out of date as the server receives new data.

From the above it is seen that an improved system for delivering custom pages is needed.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An improved custom page server is provided by virtue of the present invention. In one embodiment, user preferences are organized into templates stored in compact data structures and the live data used to fill the templates is stored local to the page server which is ~~handling~~ ^{handling} user requests for custom pages. One process is executed on the page server for every request. The process is provided a user template for the user making the request, where the user template is either generated from user preferences or retrieved from a cache of recently used user templates. Each user process is provided access to a large region of shared memory which contains all of the live data needed to fill any user template. Typically, the pages served are news pages, giving the user a custom selection of stock quotes, news headlines, sports scores, weather, and the like. With the live data stored in a local,

0033348 004093
000160 0026600

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIG. 1 shows a client-server system 100 which is used to display custom news pages. A custom news page is displayed on a browser 102 which obtains the page from a page server 104 via Internet 106. While only one browser 102 is shown, a typical system will have many browsers connecting and disconnecting to the system.

The art of client-server systems using HTTP (HyperText Transport Protocol) messaging or other protocols is well known and will not be addressed in detail here. Essentially, browser 102 makes a request for a particular page by specifying a Uniform Resource Locator ("URL") for the page. In the example shown in FIG. 1, the request is directed to the URL "http://my.yahoo.com/". Normally, this URL is directed to the root directory of a machine named my.yahoo.com. As is the convention in Internet communications, browser 102 submits the domain portion ("my.yahoo.com") of the URL to a name server, such as name server 108, to determine an actual address for the page server 104. Name server 108 returns an IP (Internet Protocol) address to browser 102 directing it to a page server 104. Where multiple page servers 104 are used, name server 108 returns IP addresses in a round-robin fashion to distribute the load over multiple page servers. Alternatively, name server 108 might distribute the load more deterministic by tracking browser addresses and hashing the browser address to select a page server 104. It is deterministic in that any given browser always accesses the same page server 104. This allows for more efficient caching of user templates, since more cache hits are likely where a given browser always returns to one page server.

When a page server receives the URL for its root directory, it interprets that as a request for the user's custom summary page. The user is determined not from the URL, but from a "cookie" provided by browser 102 with the URL. Cookies are strings of data stored by browsers and sent along with any request to a URL having a domain associated with the cookie.

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Page server 104 is shown comprising a page generator 210, a shared memory 212 for storing live data and a cache 214

for caching user templates such as user template 202. Page generator 210 generates a custom front page 218 from a user template and the live data stored in shared memory 212.

Although not shown, custom pages other than the front page can be generated in a similar fashion. Using user templates and a shared memory for the live data, page server 104 can quickly build custom pages in response to a user request. Where the user template is cached, the page can be generated entirely within page server 104.

10. Shared memory 212 is organized as a set of memory mapped files. With memory mapped files, the operating system maintains the data in permanent storage, but permanently caches the files in shared memory 212. This allows for quick recovery should a page server crash, since all of the shared
15 memory can simply be reloaded from the permanent storage. This is a great feature from a user convenience standpoint, since the user will never be faced with a situation where they have to wait for a server to rebuild a page for them by querying the various data providing servers, such as sports
20 server 230, stock server 232 and news server 234. As should be apparent from this description and FIG. 2, page generator 210 can generate custom front page 218 much more quickly using shared memory 212 as compared with using servers 230, 232, 234 and page template 202. One reason for this is that the time
25 it takes to retrieve data from shared memory 212 does not appreciably increase relative to the bandwidth delay time when more data is retrieved. For example, if stock server 232 were queried for each individual stock quote, a page with fifty stock quotes might take ten times as long to generate as a
30 page with five stock quotes.

One aspect of the present invention is the realization that every piece of information a person can request on a page is storable in a shared memory closely coupled to a page generator. For example, page server 104
35 shown in FIG. 2 can accommodate 65,000 different symbols for which quotes are provided. In one embodiment, all of the stock information for all 65,000 symbols is stored in a 13 to 14 megabytes section of the shared memory. Where shared

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has expired. In these cases, if the assignment of a user to a single page server is desired, name server 108 (see FIG. 1) will use the user name from the provided cookie or the user's IP address to assign a page server based on a hash of the user name or IP address.

FIG. 3 is an illustration of global user template 204. Global user template 204 is an HTML (HyperText Markup Language) document with additional tags as placeholders for live data. Several placeholders 302 are shown in FIG. 3.

FIG. 4 is an illustration of user template 202 as might be generated from global user template 204 (see Fig. 3) and a user configuration record 206. A full listing of user template 202 is included herewith in Appendix A. User template 202 is determined by the user configuration and is independent of the live data, therefore it can be cached without needing to be updated, unless the user chooses to edit the configuration information. Preferably, the user templates are cached rather than the user configuration, to save a step and reduce the time to respond to a request for the page. Caching is more effective where the typical user makes several requests in a short time span and then doesn't make any requests for a long period of time.

Essentially, user template 202 contains the information about the user which does not change until the user changes his or her preferences. Of course, the system operator could choose to make changes to how the system operates, thus requiring changes to the user preferences and user templates. User template 202 is shown comprising internal variables such as a time zone and demographic information. The demographic information, on the second line in FIG. 4 is used for selection of an advertisement which will be part of the custom page. In this example, the advertisement is targeted by the demographic information in the user template ":M,85,95035,T,*" indicating that a suitable ad should be targeted to a male user, age 85, located in zip code 95035, etc. As shown, the portfolio section contains selected stock symbols, the scoreboard section contains

selected team symbols, and the weather section contains selected weather cities/zip codes.

The selections of stock quote symbols, team scores, and weather cities are set by the user. In a preferred

5 embodiment, intelligent defaults are selected by the system prior to user selection, so that users unfamiliar with the customization process will nonetheless be able to view non empty custom pages. This is described in further detail below in connection with FIG. 6.

10 FIG. 5 is an illustration of a user front page 218 returned by page server 104. User front page 218 as shown in FIG. 5 includes many elements, some of which are described here in further detail. User front page 218 is built according to a user template and live data. The user template
15 specifies, for example which quotes are shown in the portfolio module, which cities are displayed in the weather module, etc. Each of the modules 504 can be customized by a user and moved about front page 218. The modules 504 are also reusable, in that any customized module which appears on multiple pages can
20 be edited from any one of those pages and the edits will be reflected on each of the pages. Other custom pages for the user can be viewed by selecting one of the page buttons 502 appearing below the header. Other pages and utilities can be selected using the buttons 508 which are part of the header.

25 In addition to all of the live data shown in FIG. 5 being stored in the shared memory, summaries from each of the major news topics can also be stored in the shared memory and viewed by pressing on the news topic header, such as news topic header 506. As should be noted, the page generator can
30 also intelligently display dates 510 customized for a particular user, using a time zone variable in the user template. This time zone variable is shown as the first line in user template 202 in FIG. 4. In addition to being able to modify each of the modules, in many cases the order of
35 appearance of the modules is customizable. For example, the order of the various sections of user template 202 shown in FIG. 4 is not fixed.

5 Since each of the news stories is essentially a static page
linked to a headline shown in the news section, these can
simply be linked to static pages on a news server.

Other intelligent defaults can be provided in other contexts. For example, the header of user front page 218 includes a button 508 labelled "myweb" which, when pressed, would lead the user to a custom listing of web sites. The initial defaults for that custom listing of web sites might be

The above description is illustrative and not
5 restrictive. Many variations of the invention will become
apparent to those of skill in the art upon review of this
disclosure. The scope of the invention should, therefore, be
determined not with reference to the above description, but
instead should be determined with reference to the appended
10 claims along with their full scope of equivalents.

```
<!-- timezone:-8,PT 0 -->
<!-- ad:M,85,95035,T,* 792 -->
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[illegible]

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5 <td align=center bgcolor="#dcdcdc"><font
color="#000000"><b>Front&nbsp;&nbsp;Page</b></font></td>
<td>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;|&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;</td>
<td align=center><a href="/news/business/summary.html?v">Business</a></td>
<td>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;|&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;</td>
10 <td align=center><a
href="/news/portfolio_summary.html?v">Portfolios</a></td>
<td>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;|&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;</td>
<td align=center><a
href="/news/entertainment/summary.html?v">Entertainment</a></td>
15 <td>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;|&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;</td>
<td align=center><a href="/news/sports/summary.html?v">Sports</a></td>
<td>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;|&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;</td>
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30 <table border=0 cellpadding=1 cellspacing=0 width="100%">
<tr bgcolor="#dcdcdc"><td colspan=4 width="100%"><table border=0
cellpadding=2 cellspacing=0 width="100%"><tr><td width="100%"><b><font
size="+1">P<font size="+0">ORTFOLIOS</font></font></b></td><td
align=right><a
35 href="http://edit.my.yahoo.com/config/eval_quotes?.done=http://my.yahoo.co
m/news/summary.html?v"></a></td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td align=center colspan=4><form method=get
40 action="http://quote.yahoo.com/quotes"><font size="-1"><input type=text
size=10 name=symbols><input type=submit value="Get Quotes"><br><font
size="0">quotes delayed 20 minutes - <a
href="/fin_disclaimer.html">disclaimer</a><br>click on symbol for detailed
quote + news<br><b>*</b> indicates new news during last
45 24hrs<font></form></td></tr></table>
<hr size=0><table border=0 cellpadding=1 cellspacing=0 width="100%">
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cellpadding=2 cellspacing=0 width="100%"><tr><td width="100%"><a
href="/sum/?http://sports.yahoo.com/"><b><font size="+1">S<font
size="+0">COREBOARD</font></font></b></a></td><td align=right><a
5 href="http://edit.my.yahoo.com/config/set_sports?.done=http://my.yahoo.com
/news/summary.html?v"></a></td></tr></table></td></tr>

10 <hr size=0><table border=0 cellpadding=2 cellspacing=0 width="100%">
<tr bgcolor="#dcdcdc"><td colspan=3 width="100%"><table border=0
cellpadding=2 cellspacing=0 width="100%"><tr><td width="100%"><a
href="/my/?http://weather.yahoo.com/"><b><font size="+1">W<font
size="+0">EATHER</font></font></b></a></td><td align=right><a
15 href="http://edit.my.yahoo.com/config/set_wni?.done=http://my.yahoo.com/ne
ws/summary.html?v"></a></td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td align=center colspan=3><font size=0>click on city for extended
20 forecast</font></td></tr>
</table>

<hr size=0>
<p></td>
25 <td align=center valign=top width="100%">

<table border=1 cellpadding=2 cellspacing=0 width="100%">
</table>

30 </td></tr>
</table>

<center>
35 <table border=1 cellpadding=2 cellspacing=0 width="100%">

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</center>

40 <p>
<hr>
<center>
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<tr>
45 <td align=left valign=top><table border=0 cellpadding=0 cellspacing=0>

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<tr><td align=left valign=top><a href="/my/?http://www.yahoo.com/"></a></td>  
<td>&nbsp; &nbsp; &nbsp; </td>  
5   <td align=left valign=bottom width="100%"><font size="-1"><i>Copyright  
&copy; 1994-1997 Yahoo! Inc. All rights reserved.</i><br>Portions  
copyright &copy; 1997 Reuters Ltd. All rights reserved.<br>  
Portions copyright &copy; 1997 SportsTicker Enterprises LP. All rights  
reserved.<br>  
10  Portions copyright &copy; 1997 Weathernews Inc. All rights reserved.<br>  
Portions copyright &copy; 1997 Business Wire. All rights reserved.<br>  
Portions copyright &copy; 1997 PR Newswire. All rights reserved.<br>  
Questions, comments, or suggestions? Send us <a  
href="http://my.yahoo.com/feedback.html">feedback</a>.</font></td>  
15 </tr>  
</table>  
</td>  
<td align=right><a href="/bin/logout_menu"></a></td>  
</tr>  
</table>  
25 </center>  
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<area coords="0,0,50,68" href="/my/?http://www.yahoo.com/">  
<area coords="51,0,100,68"  
href="http://edit.my.yahoo.com/config/login?logout=1">  
30 </map>  
  
</body>  
</html>
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<a >edit="" a="" href="http://edit.my.yahoo.com/config/eval_left?mode=left_nsum&.done=http%3a%2f%2fmy%2eyahoo%2ecom%2fnews%2fsummary%2html%3fv" left<="">			
 			
ORTFOLIOS			
<a >edit<="" a="" href="http://edit.my.yahoo.com/config/eval_quotes?.done=http://my.yahoo.com/news/summary.html?v"> 			
 			
<a >="" <img="" alt="arrowdown" href="http://edit.my.yahoo.com/config/set_portf_expand?port=Quotes&expand=0&.done=http://my.yahoo.com/news/summary.html?v">			
Quotes			
<div style="float:right;"> <div>DJIA</div> <div>7312.15 442.36 1384.91 845.48 609.02 32 1/2 29 1/4 19 1/4 29 1/4 32 1/2</div> </div>			
<div style="float:right;"> <div>NYSE</div> <div>+22.75 +0.82 -19.88 +1.85 -5/8 +1/2 -5/8</div> </div>			
<div style="float:right;"> <div>NASDAQ</div> <div>-0.88 -5/8 -5/8</div> </div>			
<div style="float:right;"> <div>S&P 500</div> <div>-0.88 -5/8 -5/8</div> </div>			
<div style="float:right;"> <div>AMEX</div> <div>-0.88 -5/8 -5/8</div> </div>			
<div style="float:right;"> <div>YHOO</div> <div>-0.88 -5/8 -5/8</div> </div>			
<div style="float:right;"> <div>NSCP</div> <div>-0.88 -5/8 -5/8</div> </div>			
<div style="float:right;"> <div>IOM</div> <div>-0.88 -5/8 -5/8</div> </div>			
<div style="float:right;"> <div>NSCP</div> <div>-0.88 -5/8 -5/8</div> </div>			
<div style="float:right;"> <div>YHOO</div> <div>-0.88 -5/8 -5/8</div> </div>			
<input type="text" value="Get Quotes"/>			

delayed 20 minutes - [disclaimer](/fin_disclaimer.html)
click on
symbol for detailed quote + news
***** indicates new news during last
24hrs

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5 <tr bgcolor="#dcdcdc"><td colspan=5 width="100%"><table border=0 cellpadding=2
cellspacing=0 width="100%"><tr><td width="100%"><a
href="/sum/?http://sports.yahoo.com/"><b><font size="+1">S<font
size="+0">COREBOARD</font></font></b></a></td><td align=right><a
href="http://edit.my.yahoo.com/config/set_sports?.done=http://my.yahoo.com/news/su
10 mmmary.html?v"></a></td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan=5><b><font size="-1">TODAY</font></b></td></tr>
<tr><td valign=top><font size=-1><a
15 href="http://sports.yahoo.com/al/">AL</a></font></td><td valign=top><font size=-
1>Detroit<br><b>Oakland</b></font></td><td align=right valign=top><font size=-
1>8<br>9</font></td><td valign=top>&#160;</td><td valign=top><font size=-1><a
href="http://sports.yahoo.com/al/rcps/970603/detoak.html">F</a></font></td></tr>
<tr><td valign=top><font size=-1><a
20 href="http://sports.yahoo.com/nl/">NL</a></font></td><td valign=top><font size=-
1>San Francisco<br><b>Florida</b></font></td><td align=right valign=top><font
size=-1>9<br>1</font></td><td valign=top>&#160;</td><td valign=top><font size=-
1><a
href="http://sports.yahoo.com/nl/rcps/970603/sfofla.html">F</a></font></td></tr>
25 <tr><td colspan=5><b><font size="-1">YESTERDAY</font></b></td></tr>
<tr><td valign=top><font size=-1><a
href="http://sports.yahoo.com/al/">AL</a></font></td><td valign=top><font size=-
1>Detroit<br><b>Oakland</b></font></td><td align=right valign=top><font size=-
1>8<br>7</font></td><td valign=top>&#160;</td><td valign=top><font size=-1><a
30 href="http://sports.yahoo.com/al/rcps/970602/detoak.html">F</a></font></td></tr>
<tr><td valign=top><font size=-1><a
href="http://sports.yahoo.com/nl/">NL</a></font></td><td valign=top><font size=-
1>San Francisco<br><b>Florida</b></font></td><td align=right valign=top><font
size=-1>2<br>4</font></td><td valign=top>&#160;</td><td valign=top><font size=-
35 1><a
href="http://sports.yahoo.com/nl/rcps/970602/sfofla.html">F</a></font></td></tr>
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        cellspacing=0 width="100%"><tr><td width="100%"><a
            href="/my/?http://weather.yahoo.com/"><b><font size="+1">W<font
                size="+0">EATHER</font></font></b></a></td><td align=right><a
                    href="http://edit.my.yahoo.com/config/set_wni?.done=http://my.yahoo.com/news/summa
45 ry.html?v"></a></td></tr></table></td></tr>
        <tr><td><a href="http://weather.yahoo.com/forecast/Augusta_GA_US_f.html"><font
            size="-1">Augusta, GA</font></a></td><td align=right><font size="-1">63...78
50 F</font></td><td align=right><font size="-1"></font></td></tr>

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1<tr><td><a href="http://weather.yahoo.com/forecast/London_UK_f.html"><font size="-
1">London, UK</font></a></td><td align=right><font size="-1">50...73
F</font></td><td align=right><font size="-1"></font></td></tr>
5<tr><td><a href="http://weather.yahoo.com/forecast/Oakland_CA_US_f.html"><font
size="-1">Oakland, CA</font></a></td><td align=right><font size="-1">59...70
F</font></td><td align=right><font size="-1"></font></td></tr>
10<tr><td><a href="http://weather.yahoo.com/forecast/San_Jose_CA_US_f.html"><font
size="-1">San Jose, CA</font></a></td><td align=right><font size="-1">54...75
F</font></td><td align=right><font size="-1"></font></td></tr>
15<tr><td align=center colspan=3><font size=0>click on city for extended
forecast</font></td></tr>
</table>

<hr size=0>
<p></td>
20<td align=center valign=top width="100%">
<center>
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<tr>
<td bgcolor="#000000">
25<table border=0 cellpadding=0 cellspacing=0 width="100%"><tr>
<td align=left valign=bottom><font color="#ffffff"
size="+1"><nobr><b>F</b></nobr></font><font
color="#ffffff"><b><nobr>RONT</nobr>&nbsp; <nobr>PAGE</nobr></b> - Jun 3
7:40pm</font></td>
30<td align=right><a
href="http://edit.my.yahoo.com/config/edit_news?.hier=News+Summary%3aEdit&.done=ht
tp://my.yahoo.com/news/summary.html?v"></a></td></tr>
35</table>
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</center>
40<table border=1 cellpadding=2 cellspacing=0 width="100%">
<tr><td bgcolor="#dcdcdc" colspan=2><a href="/news/top_stories.html?v"><b><font
size="+1">B</font>reaking News</b></a>&nbsp; <i>Jun 3 5:03pm</i></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan=2><ul>
45<li><a href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603/news/stories/bombing_61.html"
>Judge Moves to Avoid McVeigh 'Lynching'</a>
<li><a href=
"http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603/news/stories/bombingappeals_1.html">McVeigh
's Expected Appeals May Last Years</a>

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1      <li><a
href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603/news/stories/bombingpenalty_1.html">Ex
perts: Plea for Mercy is McVeigh's Best Hope</a>
</ul></td></tr>
5      <tr><td bgcolor="#dcdcdc" colspan=2><a href="/news/world.html?v"><b><font
size="+1">W</font>orld</b></a>&nbsp;<i>Jun 3 2:09pm</i></td></tr>
      <tr><td colspan=2><ul>
      <li><a
href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603/international/stories/canada_6.html">C
10      anadian Liberals Face Thorny Issues</a>
      <li><a
href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603/international/stories/nato_10.html">U.
S. Advocates Ready for NATO Expansion Fight</a>
      <li><a
href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603/international/stories/leone_11.html">U
15      .S. Ferries More Foreigners from Sierra Leone</a>
      </ul></td></tr>
      <tr><td bgcolor="#dcdcdc" colspan=2><a
href="http://biz.yahoo.com/news/z0000.html"><b><font size="+1">U</font>.S. Stock
20      News and Report</b></a>&nbsp;<i></i></td></tr>
      <tr><td colspan=2><ul>
      <li><a href="http://biz.yahoo.com/finance/97/06/03/crdm_y001_1.html">Cardima Inc
IPO range reduced - underwriter</a>
      <li><a href="http://biz.yahoo.com/finance/97/06/03/luk_wtsc_1.html">AMEX to trade
25      Leucadia, West TeleServices options</a>
      <li><a href="http://biz.yahoo.com/finance/97/06/03/acv_acva_1.html">CBOE to trade
options on Alberto-Culver Class A</a>
      </ul></td></tr>
      <tr><td bgcolor="#dcdcdc" colspan=2><a href="/news/sports/mlb.html?v"><b><font
30      size="+1">M</font>ajor League Baseball</b></a>&nbsp;<i>Jun 3 5:15pm</i></td></tr>
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      <li><a href="http://sports.yahoo.com/mlb/lgns/970603/draftlist.html">1997 baseball
free agent draft first round selections</a>
      <li><a href="http://sports.yahoo.com/nl/lgns/970603/nlstars.html">Mike Piazza
35      leads balloting in NL All-Star voting</a>
      <li><a href="http://sports.yahoo.com/nl/lgns/970603/nlvotes.html">National League
All-Star voting results</a>
      </ul></td></tr>
      <tr><td bgcolor="#dcdcdc" colspan=2><a
href="/news/entertainment/top_stories.html?v"><b><font
40      size="+1">E</font>ntertainment Top Stories</b></a>&nbsp;<i>Jun 3
6:35pm</i></td></tr>
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      <li><a href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603
45      /entertainment/summary_1.html#headline_1">Clinton Reflects on Music </a>
      <li><a href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603
/entertainment/summary_1.html#headline_2">Gifford: Marriage is Solid </a>
      <li><a href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603
/entertainment/summary_1.html#headline_3">Rockabilly Legend Hospitalized </a>
50      </ul></td></tr>

```

[illegible]

20 </html>